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*An abstract of a Letter from the worshipsful John Evelyn Esq; sent to one of the Secretaries of the R. Society concerning the damage done to his Gardens by the preceding Winter.*

SIR,

**I** should be altogether inexcusable for not having been to wait upon the Society of late, if my health had permitted, with some other unexpected occasions (before I remov'd from *Lond.*) which I could not decently avoid: This was I assure you, a sensible Affliction to me, and now I am come into the Country, have beheld the havock which a rude season has made in my poor Gardens, and receiv'd your Letter, wherein you acquaint me that the Socie y expects an Account of my sufferings, I must begin with the Poet, ——— *Fubes removeare dolorem*: In a word, the past Winter has been so severe in my Territories, and where it could expugne the more defensible, and such as were inclosed, it has ravag'd all that lay open, and were abroad, without any mercy.

As to Timber Trees. I have not many here of any considerable age or stature, except a few *Elms*, which (having been decaying many years) one cannot well find to have receiv'd any fresh wounds distinguishable from old cracks and hollownesses; and indeed I am told by divers, that *Elms* have not suffer'd, as the great *Oaks* have done; nor do I find amongst innumerable of that Species (*Elms*) which I have planted, and that are now about 25 and 30 years standing, any of them touch'd: The same I observe of *Limes*, *Walt-nuts*, *Yew*, *Horn-beams*, *Burch*, *Chesnut* and other foresters: But as I said mine are young comparatively, and yet one would think, that should less protect them, be aise more tender: so as it seems the rising so much complain'd of, has happn'd chiefly among the over-grown Trees, especially *Oaks*: my Lord *Wymouth* made his Lamentation to me, and so has the Earl of *Chatterfield*, Lord *Ferrers*, Sr. *William Fermor* and others concern'd in the same Calamity, which I mention, because of their distant habitations. But if rightly I remember, one of these Noble Persons lately told me, that since the Thaw, the Trees which were exceedingly split, were come together

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and clos'd again, and I easily believ'd it; but that they are really as solid as before. I doubt will not a pear, when they shall come to be examin'd by the Axe, and converted to use: Nor has this accident happen'd only to standing Timber, but to that which has been fell'd and season'd, as Mr. *the* Master Builder in his Majesty's Ship yard here, inform'd me: so much for our *Indiginees*. As for *Exotics*, I fear my *Cork-trees* will hardly recover; but the Spring is yet so very backward (even in this warm and dry spot of mine) that I cannot pronounce any thing positively; especially of such, whose bark is very thick and rugged, such as is the *Cork*, *Laricina*, and divers of the resinous Trees. The *Constantinopolitan* or *Horse Chestnut* is turgid with buds, and ready to explain its leaf. My *Cedars* I think are lost: The *Ilex* and scarlet Oak not so; The *Arbutus* doubtful, and so are *Rays*, but some will escape, and most of them repullulate and spring afresh if cut down near the Earth, at the latter end of the month: The *Scotch Fir*, *Spruce*, and white *Spanish* (which last uses to suffer in their tender buds by the spring frosts) have receiv'd no damage this Winter; I cannot say the same of the *Pine* which bears the greater Cone, but other *Norways* and *Pinasters* are fresh: *Laurel* is only discolour'd, and some of the woody branches mortified, which being cut to the quick will soon put forth again, it being a succulent Plant. Amongst our Shrubs, *Rosemary* is intirely lost, and to my great sorrow; because I had not only beautiful hedges of it, but sufficient to afford me flowers for the making a very considerable quantity of the *Queen of Hungaries* celebrated Water: so universal (I fear) is the destruction of this excellent Plant (not only over *England*, but our neighbour Countries more Southward) that we must raise our next hopes from the Seed. *Palmetus* or Sea Perseflan (of which I had a pretty hedge) is also perish'd, and so another of French *Burges*; the *Cypress* are all of them scorchi'd, and some to death, especially such as were kept shorn in Pyramids; but amongst great numbers, there will divers escape, after they are well chaffiz'd, that is, with a tough hazel or other wand to beat off their dead and dusty leaves, which growing much closer than other shrubs, hinder the air and dews from refreshing the interior parts. This discipline I use to all my tonfile shrubs with good success as oft as a winter parches them. The berry bearing *Savine* (which if well understood and cultivated were the only best *juccedaneous*

to *Cypress*) has not suffered in the least ; it perfectly resembles the *Cypress* and grows very tall and thick. I think the *Arbor Thuya* is alive, and so is the *American Acacia*, *Acanthus*, *Palurus*, *Pomgranad* ; my *Laur-stinus* looks suspiciously ; some large and old *Alaternus*'s are kill'd, especially such as were more expos'd to the Sun, whereas those that grow in the shade escape ; the reason of which I conjecture to be from the reciprocations of being somewhat relax'd every day, and then made rigid and stiff again all night, which bending, and unbending so often, opening and closing the parts, does exceedingly mortifie them, and all other tender Plants, which growing in shady places undergo but one Thaw and change. Most of these yet will revive again at the root, being cut close to ground : The *Phillyrens angustl*, and *Serratifolus* (both of them incomparably the best for ornamental hedges of any the perennial greens I know) have hardly been sensible of the least impression, more then tarnishing of their leaves, no more have the Spanish *Jasmines*, and *Pesban*, and I enumerate these particulars the more minutely, that Gentlemen who are curious, may take notice what *Plants* they may trust to abroad, in all Events ; for I speak only of such as are expos'd : As for the choiser Rarities which are set in for hyemation, they certainly escape, or are impair'd, accordingly as they are treated by the more, or less experienc'd and industrious Gardner, or commodiouness of the Conservatory ; but to say what may be added on this Subject, would require a large Chapter, not a Letter, I would in the mean time, advise such as have suffer'd detriment in their green Houses, not to despair, when they see the leaves of of their *Myrtles*, *Oranges*, *Oleanders*, *Jasmines* and other precious Shrubs, ruslet or altogether shrivell'd and falling ; but to cut them to the quick, plaster the wounds, and plunge their cases and pots (trim'd with fresh mould, &c.) in a warm bed, carefully refresh'd, shaded, air'd and treated as sick patients, and as the prudent Gardner best knows how. But above all, that he be sure, not to expose them, till these Eastern Winds (which I call our English *Etisfan*, and which makes our Springs so uncomfortable, when we think Winter and all danger past) be qualified ; for they are deadly to all our Plants abroad, and frequently do us more prejudice than the most churlish Winters ; as commonly finishing the destruction of what the frosts have spar'd, nor are we to be flatter'd with a warm day or

two, which are apt to tempt Gardners to set out their Plants, before the end of *April*, or that we find the wife *Mulberry* put forth ; which is certainly the most faithful monitor ; nor should we indeed, cut, or transplant any of the *Perennials* 'till of themselves they begin to sprout.

I need say nothing of of *Holly*, *Yew*, *Box*, *Juniper*, &c. (hardy and spontaneous to our Country) and yet to my grief again, I find an holly standard of near 100 years old, drooping, and of doubtful aspect ; and a very beautiful hedge (tho indeed much younger) being clip'd about Michaelmas, is mortified near a foot beneath the top, and in some places to the very ground ; so as there's nothing seems proof against such a Winter ; which is late cut, and expos'd. This hedge does also grow against the South, and is very russet, whilst the contrary side is as fresh and green as ever ; and in all other places of my Plantations that are shaded, the unhorn *Hollies* maintain their verdure, and are I judge impregnable against all assaults of Weather.

Among the fruit Trees, and Murals, none seem to have suffer'd save *Figs* ; but they being cut down, will spring again at the root. The *Umes* have escap'd ; and of the esculent Plants and Salads most, except *Artichokes*, which are universally lost ; and (what I prefer before any Salad whatever eaten raw, when young) my *Sampier* is all rotted to the very root : how to repair my loss, I know not, for I could never make any of the seed, which came from the rock *Sampire* (tho mine were of the very kind) to grow.

The arboresecent and other *Sedums*, *Aloes*, &c. (tho hous'd) perish'd with me ; but the *Yucca*, and *Opuntia* escap'd. Tulips many are lost, and so the *Constantinople Narcissus*, and such *Tuberose* as were not kept in the chimney corner where was continual fire : some *Anemones* appear, but I believe many are rotted ; but I have made no great search in the flowery *Parterre*, only I find that most capillaries spring, and other humble, and repent Plants notwithstanding all this rigorous season.

My *Tortoise* (which by his constant burying himself in the Earth at approach of Winter I look upon as a kind of *Plant-Animal*) hapning to be obstructed by a Vine-root, from mining to the depth, he was usually wont to interr, is found stark dead, after having many years escap'd the severest Winter. Of *Fish* I have lost very few ; and the *Nightingals* (which

(which for being a short wing'd Bird, and so exceeding fat, at the time of the year, we commonly suppose them to change the Climate, (whereas indeed they are then hardly able to flee an hundred yards) are as brisk and frolic as ever, nor do I think they alter their summer stations, whatever become of them all Winter. I know not yet of any body, who has given tolerable satisfaction in this particular, amongst our *Ornithologists*.

Thus *Sr*. I have sent you a Rhapsody of such Observations as I have been able to make since my return home, and I wish they may prove of any importance to the Society, to which, and to your self. I am

*Sr*,

*Says Court Depford*  
*April 14, 1684.*

A most devoted  
and Obedient Servant